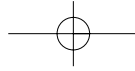


# GRSP FOCUS

## Road safety publicity campaigns





## Road safety publicity campaigns

A road safety publicity campaign is part of a set of activities which aim to promote safe road use. Mass media advertising is often the most visible component of a campaign, however to be effective, this must be combined with visible government and/or community support, particularly law enforcement.

The effectiveness of publicity campaigns when they are backed up by enforcement is shown by substantial reductions in drunk driving in Australia and Europe.

### Purpose of a publicity campaign

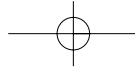
The ultimate goal is to reduce crashes and injuries on the roads. Research in Europe and the USA suggests that around ninety percent of serious road crashes involve human failings. Campaigns target people and generally aim to change behaviour, either directly, or by providing information to influence attitudes and thus have an impact on behaviour.

Key purposes of a publicity campaign are one or more of:

- to inform
- to change attitudes
- to change behaviour.

For example, publicity about the number of deaths and injuries caused by speeding, combined with information about how lower speeds reduce the number of deaths and injuries, may change attitudes to speeding, or make lower speed limits and higher penalties for infringements more acceptable. But the link with law enforcement is essential. The fear of being caught and penalised for traffic offences appears to be a more powerful motive for reducing speed than the fear of being involved in a crash. A campaign is important to lift the profile of speeding as an issue which it is legitimate for the police to pursue, and to make drivers aware of the risk of prosecution.

**Combined with enforcement,  
road safety publicity campaigns improve  
road user behaviour and reduce road crashes**



### The Victoria State, Australia, and New Zealand approach to road safety publicity.

- emotional appeals about realistic behavioural consequences about being penalised or injured
- stress enforcement activities
- adverts should be:
  - realistic;
  - non-judgemental;
  - convincing and not apologetic; and should
  - contain as much emotion as possible
- test concepts on target groups before proceeding
- track how audience is responding through
  - changes in attitudes;
  - recall and relevance; and
  - changes in crash patterns.

#### Are campaigns effective?

Research in motorised countries shows that a publicity campaign, by itself, has only modest impact on attitudes and behaviour. Campaigns work best when combined with other interventions, such as enforcement of traffic laws and regulations, or provision of other safety services and products.

Road safety campaigns are generally more demanding than commercial marketing campaigns. They attempt to change behaviour, rather than encourage consumption of a new product or a change of brand. In some cases, they are trying to persuade people to give up behaviour that they enjoy, such as drinking when they will

be driving afterwards, while in others they are asking people to do things that are seen as inconvenient, such as driving more slowly.

Individuals may see little or no relevance to themselves in adopting a changed behaviour and their direct personal experience may run counter to the evidence being presented. For example, a driver who has regularly exceeded the speed limit and has yet to be involved in a crash does not accept that the statistical evidence linking speed and risk applies to him. This illustrates why it is important to link most publicity campaigns with law enforcement in order to achieve the desired change in behaviour.

## Implementing a campaign

### 1. Define the problem

Base the campaign on information. Determine the behavioural factors involved in the type of crash or injury under investigation. Define the key features of the behaviour to be addressed. Identify the target group. Assess the social context for the campaign. Consider relevant research and analyse what has worked before and elsewhere. Identify the complementary government and/or community interventions required to support the desired change in behaviour.

### 2. Determine objectives

The campaign objectives should be specific. They should always be linked to a measurable behaviour change. The objectives can be about shifting community understanding and support for government policies - such as wearing a seat belt or helmet or - about what to do to improve safety, such as driving more slowly.

### 3. Agree supporting activities

Identify the key interventions required to support the desired change in behaviour and the organisations responsible. The police are generally the most important.

They are essential partners for campaigns targeting anti-drink drive, anti-speeding and seat belt and helmet wearing, especially when laws are in place that provide effective sanctions for non-compliance. High profile policing can send a powerful deterrent message.

### 4. Select lead agency

Successful campaigns are normally managed by a lead agency in consultation with other stakeholders. The lead agency is usually the responsible government department, a National Road Safety Council, or a road safety NGO. Credibility is crucial. Those conducting and designing the campaign must be seen to be both knowledgeable and impartial.

### 5. Use the right skills

Road safety publicity campaigns require a combination of skills. Specialists with behavioural and social science skills should design the content of the campaign and identify the target audience and messages. Delivering the message requires marketing, social advocacy and advertising skills. Project management skills are needed to deliver the campaign on time and within budget.



**No matter the price  
no matter how new  
the best safety device  
in the car is you**

*Contrast the lack of focus in this roadside poster (top) sponsored by Burma Shave in the USA in the 1940s, with these current hard-hitting images from RTA, NSW, Australia (right).*



#### 6. Communications brief

Summarise the behavioural and social objectives of the campaign, the supporting government / community interventions, the target audience and the scope of the campaign. Outline a communications strategy, based on market segmentation and targeting, and the resources available to support the campaign.

#### 7. Develop the campaign

Seek creative ideas on how to convey the messages - keep them simple, clear and few. Test creative concepts on a pilot sample of the main target audience and use the feedback to finalise the campaign. Other government, community and police supporting actions should be planned in conjunction with the campaign.

#### 8. Deliver the campaign

Launch the campaign at a high profile media event, complemented by extensive advertising. Keep stakeholders informed of progress so that they can reinforce the key message when opportunities arise.

#### 9. Evaluate the impact

All major campaigns should be evaluated. This is often done through a pre- and post-campaign survey. Measure behavioural changes, such as improved seat belt or helmet wearing, or reduced speeds. However, sustainable behavioural changes take time to achieve. Short-term changes should be treated cautiously and surveys should also be done well down stream. These inform decisions about the time intervals between campaigns, for example how frequently to run adverts on TV.

## Emerging good practice

### Anti-drink drive campaigns and random breath testing

The Australian States of New South Wales and Victoria have conducted anti-drink drive campaigns continually since the early 1980s when .05 blood alcohol restrictions and random breath testing began. The style and content of the advertising has varied over the years. However the key to success has been high profile police operations combined with publicity about the likelihood of being detected and arrested for driving while affected by alcohol.

### ASIPHEPHE 'Let us be safe' (Zulu)

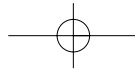
This South African project in KwaZulu Natal Province addressed drink driving and speeding. It combined publicity based on dramatic television advertising (adapted from the Australian emotional advertisements) with strong enforcement and new enforcement technologies. It resulted in improved compliance and less public criticisms of police 'revenue raising'. In the 2-year period following the campaign there was a 35% reduction in road fatalities in the province compared with 17% for the rest of the country.

### UK Department of Transport THINK!

The THINK! campaign is a component of the UK Department for Transport's road safety strategy. THINK! is a year round road safety banner for all campaigns, aiming to create a greater public awareness of road safety issues. Underpinned by a year round calendar of publicity the campaign is heavily supported at local level by police, local authorities, voluntary and private sector organisations. See [www.think.dft.gov.uk](http://www.think.dft.gov.uk)

### How fast are you going now?

In New South Wales, Australia, speeding is a factor in 40% of fatal crashes. It is also a much contested issue. A 'community dialogue' approach was adopted in 1991, to foster debate on speed and related policy and practices. As a result, social attitudes to speed enforcement and penalties have shifted, enabling government to introduce a range of strong regulatory changes. Reduced urban speed limits, more enforcement and higher penalties, combined with publicity, have resulted in reductions in speeds and in road injury.



## Find out more

Andreasen, A. (1995) *Marketing Social Change: Changing Behavior to Promote Health, Social Development, and the Environment.*

Jossey-Bass: San Francisco.

*This source discusses key issues in marketing social issues focussing on the objectives of social and behavioural change.*

Backer, T. Rogers, E. & Sopory, P.

(1992) *Designing Health Communication Campaigns: What Works.*

Sage: Newbury Park.

*A good source of advice on how to frame health and safety messages and other aspects of planning campaigns.*

Delhomme, P. (1999) *Evaluation of Road Safety Media Campaigns. Deliverable 4, GADGET Projects European Commission. Inrets. France.*

*This report reviews 265 campaign evaluations in 21 countries (but none are developing countries). It shows the importance of the link with enforcement.*

Epstein, T. S (editor) (1999)

*A Manual for Culturally-Adapted Social Marketing.* Sage: New Delhi.

*A good reference for ensuring campaigns are planned and implemented in ways that are culturally appropriate.*

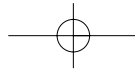
Maibach E. & Parrott, R (editors) (1995) *Designing Health Messages: Approaches from Communication Theory and Public Health Practice.* Sage: Thousand Oaks.

*This source covers a range of campaign related issues and considerations. Used in communication courses, this is a virtual textbook in health and safety communications.*

Rossiter, J.R., Percy, L & Donovan, R. (1995) *Advertising and Promotion Management 2nd edition,* New York: McGraw-Hill.

*This work uses a model of the factors which change behaviour and integrates this with the advertising and promotion planning process.*





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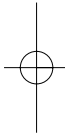
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